

116 S. Granite Avenue
Granite Falls, WA 98252



www.gffd17.org
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community invited to learn more about fire levy lid lift

Proposition will appear on the November 7, 2023, general election ballot

The Granite Falls Fire Department (Snohomish County Fire District 17) invites the community to learn more about the fire levy lid lift that will be on the November 7, 2023, general election ballot. The purpose of the lid lift is to improve emergency services.

Learn more at a Q&A session:

- Tuesday, October 24 at 6 p.m. at 116 S. Granite Ave.
- Saturday, October 28 at 9 a.m. at 116 S. Granite Ave.

Fire Chief Jim Haverfield will deliver a brief presentation and answer any questions.

The lid lift would fund additional firefighters to respond to higher call volumes and replace a fire station built in the early 1900s. Call volumes are up 40 percent since 2020 – 23 percent since 2022 – and overlapping calls are happening more frequently (that’s when two or more calls come in at the same time). In 2022, the fire department responded to a record high of 2,864 calls. The higher call volumes and overlapping calls are leading to longer response times.

The lid lift would also help reduce overtime costs. The fire department relies on full-time, part-time, and volunteer personnel to respond to calls. Due to the limited availability of part-time personnel and volunteers, full-time firefighters work significant overtime hours, ultimately costing taxpayers more.

The existing fire station built in the early 1900s needs to be replaced, as well. It is vulnerable to failure in the event of an earthquake and doesn’t have enough space for firefighters; modern equipment doesn’t fit in engine bays, and it lacks decontamination facilities for firefighters to wash off carcinogens and medical waste from their bodies and apparatus after calls.

If approved by voters, the fire levy lid lift will fund:

- Up to seven firefighters over three years to improve response times and reduce overtime costs

- Construction of a new headquarters fire station
- Replace a fire engine and ambulance over the next six years

In addition to improving response times, these projects will increase service capacity districtwide and be paid for without voter-approved debt, which costs taxpayers more in interest payments.

In 2019, voters approved a fire levy rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Since then, the rate has dropped to \$0.98. The fire department is asking voters for a lid lift of \$0.30 per \$1,000. This would change the fire levy from \$0.98 to \$1.28 and cost an additional \$10 per month or \$120 per year for the owner of a \$400,000 home (considered average).

More information about the fire levy lid lift can be found at www.gffd17.org. Fire Chief Jim Haverfield also welcomes your questions at 360-691-5553 or jim.haverfield@gffd17.org.

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Snohomish County Fire District 17, known as Granite Falls Fire Department, provides fire suppression and prevention, emergency medical service (EMS) and serves 14,641 people over 50.5 square miles, including the city of Granite Falls. In 2022, the fire department responded to a record-high of 2,864 calls. The fire department is a separate taxing district independent of the county, operates under a balanced budget, and has passed all its independent financial audits.